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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-1703

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AT-LARGE WHIP

Stephen L. Johnson
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Johnson,

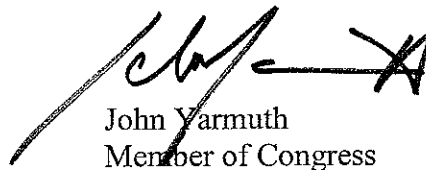
I am writing in support of Governor Beshear's letter regarding the Office of Surface Mining's proposed rule on Stream Buffer Zones. Like Governor Beshear, I am extremely concerned by efforts to weaken the 100-foot stream buffer zone. Current regulations offer minimal protections, and decreasing these protections will be devastating to the communities and environment around the mining sites.

As you are aware, Kentucky is the third largest coal producing state in the country, and provides a critical source of energy for our nation. However, as I previously wrote to the Secretary of the Interior, the economic gains of this industry should not come at the expense of our residents' health and quality of life. The damaging effects of dumping fill into our streams are evident in the water quality and environment in coal producing regions. I firmly believe the proposed stream buffer zone regulation, if implemented, will further endanger the lives of residents living near and downstream from these dumping sites.

Therefore, I urge you to reject this new regulation, and instead, work to protect our beautiful resources and the well-being of Americans who live in coal-producing regions.

Thank you for your consideration, and I will await your final decision. Please feel free to contact me if I may be of further assistance in this critically important matter.

Sincerely,



John Yarmuth
Member of Congress